

BrewCamp 2005

By Steve Kranz

This year's BrewCamp was a memorable four days. Ten brewers and spouses conquered the elements to brew a variety of beverages (and drink beer), prepare and eat one outstanding meal after another (and drink beer), sit and relax by the camp fires (and drink beer), and play and listen to music (and drink beer). Oh, and I understand that some folks even made the hike to Cunningham Falls, but I didn't see whether they took beer with them.



BrewCamp 2005 was almost a repeat of RainCamp 2002. We began arriving early on Thursday afternoon, when it sprinkled briefly after we were set up, and then cleared. But on Friday and Saturday, it was either rainy or misty most of the time. But BrewCamp has never been, nor shall it ever be, cancelled on account of weather. The minor inconveniences of a little rain were conquered with the skillful erection of several Seegers-designed tarps over our camp sites which allowed us to brew, eat and relax in dry and comfortable conditions.

We brewed a combined 48 gallons of fermented product, including 40 gallons of beer, 5 gallons of mead, and three gallons of hard cider. So, for months (or years) after the close of BrewCamp 2005, we will be reliving those exquisite meals held under the rain tarp each time we taste one of the beverages we brewed that weekend.

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Forbis' Original Corn Sugar Primer

New Product Review

By Larry Hitchcock

Everyone who attended the AHA conference in June received a welcome bag of bar coasters, a t-shirt (if you bought one), coupons, literature and other beer goodies. One of the items in the bag was a vial of a new product called *Forbis' Original Corn Sugar Primer* by Forbis Homebrewing, Inc of Raleigh, NC. The hangtag described the product as a way to make homebrewing easier by providing the "perfect amount of corn sugar and deionized water to produce the precise amount of carbonation in your homebrew." Rather than measuring out $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of sugar, boiling it for 5 minutes and cooling it down at bottling time, all you needed to do is add the 4 oz of Forbis, stir gently and bottle as usual. If it worked, it would certainly save some time when bottling.

There are other priming products out there such as drops and tablets, which have a reputation for being unreliable. I've never tried them, so I was going into this with no other experience. I had a brown ale that was ready to bottle, so I decided to give it a try. Well, it *was* easy. I just hoped it would work as easily and actually carbonate my beer.

There wasn't much on the company's website, so I emailed the president, Andy Forbis. This is the only product he sells, and has only 3 retailers across the US. He said he expected it to sell for \$3.95 a bottle, but would offer quantity discounts to homebrew clubs. I've recently seen it advertised at a "new lower price" of \$1.99 a bottle.

I have mixed feelings about the product's results. It was easy to use, and my beer did carbonate, but only slightly. I know that a lot of factors can influence natural carbonation, so something else may have played a role in the low carbonation level. To really know how well it works, I'd have to try it a few more times. I'm not sure I want to sacrifice another batch of beer, but I might just buy another bottle or two and try it again.

I must hand it to Andy Forbis, though, for developing a product that met a need for homebrewers. I hope it works out well for him.

Club Hoppenings

Club Elections

This year, we conducted club elections with the use of a (free) third-party web site. The polls closed on November 15th and a total of twenty three (23) votes were cast. It all went very smoothly, and resulted in Neil Mezebish and Larry Hitchcock being re-elected unanimously to their posts of President and Treasurer respectively. Congratulations.

Guild Christmas Party...

The Free State Homebrew Club Guild held its annual Christmas party at Clipper City Brewing Co. on Saturday, December 3. Eleven of our members attended and enjoyed good food and great beer. This event always features door prizes galore, and most of our members in attendance came away with something cool. The evening had an Asian food theme, and everything was home-made and wonderful, in particular Melinda Byrd's vegetable stir fry. And the Pineapple Upside Down Cake was sooo good, I had a second piece to make sure the first one was as good as it seemed.

The evening also featured an informal homebrew competition, where everyone had an opportunity to taste and vote for their favorite beer. Steve Kranz's homebrewed Midnight Special Pale Ale was the winner...almost a year to the day since the same recipe won our club competition that started the Clay Pipe project. [Ironically, Steve just wound up dumping a more recent batch of MSPA that must have gotten infected by something, 'cuz it was just **awful!**] Steve's prize was a \$100 gift certificate to

the Brewer's Art restaurant in Baltimore.

...and the Midnight Holiday Party 2005

The 2005 Holiday Party will be hosted again this year by Greg and Karen Lambrecht, on Saturday, December 10. If you haven't RSVP'd by now, you probably don't plan to attend...but just in case you forgot, **get on it!** Call 410-848-6511.

2005 in review

The past year was big and busy for the Midnight Homebrewers' League. We did some very cool things, starting with the Midnight Special Pale Ale project with Clay Pipe Brewing Company. In the middle of all that, we spoke at a C.C. Beekeepers Association meeting. Then came Big Brew...the National Homebrewers Conference (where we came in 2nd place in the Best Club voting)...the Brew-Ha-Ha...a couple of Happy Hours...Wine Time in the Vinyard...BrewCamp...and the usual variety of tastings and impromptu brewing events stuck in between. We also gained several new members whom we hope will become active participants in our various activities and events.

The outlook for 2006

For the upcoming year, we are hoping for a prominent role in the first annual Carroll County beer festival. This event will be held at the Union Mills Homestead in the summer. We have been in touch with the organizers of the event to offer our services, but we have no specific information as of yet to share with our membership.

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Benefits of Membership

Members of the Midnight Homebrewers' League get these benefits in addition to this newsletter:

- Priority registration for tastings and other events
- Nifty color membership card, good for discounts at local homebrew supply shops
- Purchase club-logo T-Shirts
- Membership Directory - get help from other members
- Library of "Classic Beer Style Series" brewing books to borrow
- Buy, sell, trade anything "beer" in free member ads

Midnight Homebrewers' League
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<http://users.adelphia.net/~smkranz/index.htm>

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Brewer's Tips

Please send
Brewer's Tips
via email to:

smkranz@adelphia.net, with the
subject line Brewer's Tips.

- Adding about ½ pound of dry wheat malt extract to just about any recipe will help head retention to your homebrews.
- Adding ½ pound of crushed carapils or dextrin malt to any recipe will help add a rounder mouth-feel to your beers without adding color.
- **Dry your stuff before putting it away.** As I was packing up to get ready for BrewCamp, I made a nasty discovery of a robust growth of multi-colored mold growing in the bottom of my 10 gallon mash tun (water cooler). This was no doubt the result of haste and/or laziness on my part in not thoroughly drying it before putting

it away the last time I used it. Other equipment had gotten dumped inside it which prevented it from drying out. So I had to soak it for a day in a strong P.B.W. solution, then dry it thoroughly before using it.

- So much for the plastic carboys from B.J.'s. The ones that you buy water in, and pay a \$5 deposit for, y'know? I've used the one I kept for experimental use, maybe twice. After recently racking a batch from it into my keg, I filled it with warm water and P.B.W. to let it soak clean on the kitchen counter. Two hours later, one of the kids asked why water was dripping onto the floor...about a quart of water had leaked out of it from a seam. At least it wasn't my beer.

I have now returned that carboy to B.J.'s to get my \$5 deposit back.

Brewing Calendar

By Larry Hitchcock

This column will be a reminder of beers to consider brewing NOW to enjoy when the season is right. Although any homebrew style is appropriate to have any time of year, a little forethought will have your Oktoberfest ready by late September, or thirst-quenching wheat beer on hand for when you finish mowing the lawn. To have a pint of chocolate cherry stout ready on Valentine's Day will require pre-planning by New Year's Day. Hopefully, these reminders will get your kettle on the burner!

In general, beers that seem to go better in colder weather usually are more malty and fuller bodied than the beers enjoyed other times of the year. Hop levels, depending on style, are usually higher to balance the additional malt. Darker and spicy or flavored beers, with a fuller body just seem help keep you warmer on a cold winter's night. It's not too early to start lagering for early spring beers either.

Try these:

- Stouts (using fruit flavors, coffee or chocolate)
- Barleywine
- Bock
- Maibock
- Belgian Duppels or Trippels

If you're having trouble deciding, ask any club member what they like to brew this time of year. Other sources of recipes are Maryland Homebrew, magazines and books, and our website.

Feel free to contribute your favorites for each season. Just submit them to me and we'll see they get included in the next edition. If you'd like to pass along a favorite recipe, that would be even finer!

2006 National Homebrew Competition:

Brew **now** if you want to enter something in 2006

Not many of our members care about entering their beers in competitions. I enjoy getting the feedback, and the chance to win a ribbon. But, that's just me. In case anyone else is interested, I didn't want lack of time or adequate notice to cause you to not have a beer ready to enter.

Entries for the First Round of the 2006 National Homebrew Competition are due between April 3 - 14, 2006.

That means that you have 3+ months to brew, bottle and condition your favorite recipe before it needs to be shipped.

And, if you keg your beers instead of bottle, and want to enter a kegged beer, you can bottle it with the Wensel Counterpressure Filler. Just call or email Steve Kranz and we'll figure it out.

Maryland Revenuers Make Big Moonshining Bust!

*Get you a copper kettle, get you a copper coil,
Fill it with new made corn mash and never more you'll toil.
You'll just lay there by the juniper while the moon is bright,
Watch them just a-filling in the pale moonlight.*

*Build you a fire with hickory, hickory, ash and oak,
Don't use no green or rotten wood, they'll get you by the smoke.
You'll just lay there by the juniper while the moon is bright,
Watch them just a-filling in the pale moonlight.*

*My daddy he made whiskey, my granddaddy he did too.
We ain't paid no whiskey tax since 1792.
You'll just lay there by the juniper while the moon is bright,
Watch them just a-filling in the pale moonlight.*

- Bob Dylan

A Howard County 16 year-old was busted by Maryland revenuers in October for operating an illegal still in the woods near his home.

The youngster had learned about distilling in his high school science class (he was actually paying attention). So what was he supposed to do with that knowledge? Make distilled water?

Bah! Combining his quality Maryland high school education with information he found on the Internet, he built a still out of a metal trash can, a bucket, a propane tank and some copper

tubing. Then, he snuck out of the house one night to fire it up, only to be caught red-handed with two whole teaspoons (2 tsp.) of whiskey from his still's maiden voyage. It turns out that a team of State Police and agents from the Comptroller's Office (the revenuers) had set up a stake-out after some woman walking her dogs earlier in the day had seen the still and blabbed to the police.

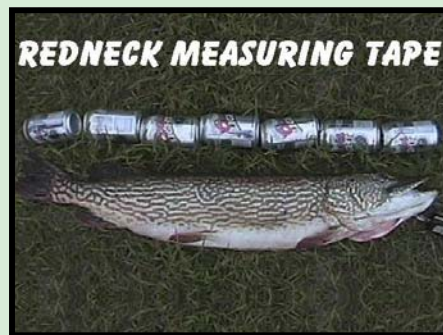
The kid was charged with misdemeanor moonshining (whatever that is). His parents had no idea about the still or that he had snuck out of the house.

Not that I condone his behavior, but it sounds like he was operating under my own personal **Guiding Principle** that it is easier to beg forgiveness than to ask permission.

To add insult to injury, they confiscated his still. This has been declared to be the first such "operation" in Maryland to be busted in the past five years. I'll pay a reward if anyone can come up genuine photos of the kid's still.

Many thanks to the crack crime-fighters of the Maryland State Comptroller's Office for making Maryland a safer place.

The Beer Can Photo Gallery (with thanks to my good friends Mike Domingue and Tom Groseclose for their valued submissions!)



More Beer & Brewing News

More on Malta

After writing our last issue's article on Malta (the malt soda), I read with great interest an article by Rich Wagner in the October/November issue of Mid-Atlantic Brewing News (MABN) about the 100th birthday of the Lion Brewery of Wilkes Barre, PA. Lion brews various brands of Malta, which accounts for approximately 60% of the brewery's total annual output. The brewery also produces several lines of craft brews, malt-based coolers, and other specialty sodas. The MABN article refers to Malta soda as "basically unfermented, unhopped Porter," and says that the product is brewed and out the door within 48 hours. The brewery's diverse product line stems from its ability to survive and adapt to pre- and post-prohibition market conditions, and enables it to keep its packaging line busy with sodas while its fermenters and conditioning tanks can be dedicated to beer.

Connecticut Rejects Beer With Elf On Label

State officials in Connecticut want to ban a holiday beer label they worry might entice children to drink beer, sparking a constitutional battle and virtually guaranteeing the beer will sell out. At issue is the label on the British import Seriously Bad Elf. It shows a scowling elf with a slingshot firing Christmas ornaments at Santa's sleigh as it flies overhead. State liquor laws bar alcohol advertising with images that might appeal to children, and the regulations specifically mention Santa. "There are certain symbols and images that appeal more strongly to children and this regulation includes the most obvious among them," Attorney General Richard Blumenthal said. "The state has wide discretion to regulate the sales of alcohol."

[What a putz. Ed.]

Bad Elf and Seriously Bad Elf are

sold in 30 other states without any problems.

BUDVAR WINS PORTUGUESE DECISION

Anheuser-Busch lost an appeal that would allow it to sell beer under the brand name Budweiser in Portugal, the European Court of Human Rights ruled in the latest round of a global legal battle between the U.S. beer giant and Czech brewery Budejovicky Budvar. Anheuser-Busch was appealing a 2001 decision by Portugal's Supreme Court, which ruled that Budejovicky Budvar had the right to use the brand name under a 1986 treaty between the Czech Republic and Portugal, which protects registered designations of origin.

BALTIMORE -- A Towson couple has acquired the rights from Texas-based Pabst to market the Mr. Boh character, the winking mascot of National Bohemian Beer. Todd Unger and Robyn Roth-Unger now have a store in the city's Fells Point neighborhood to sell Mr. Boh kitsch. Their company, Natty Boh Gear, offers Mr. Boh products in a variety of guises.

Mr. Unger said his idea began, in part, after the overwhelming response he got to Boh-themed shirts he printed, then wore to Ravens football games. "We walked into the stadium and we were inundated with questions," said Mr. Unger.

Another defining moment was when a 36-foot-tall Mr. Boh was erected at the site of a former brewery in Highlandtown.

"We pretty much mortgaged our lives to do this," Mrs. Roth-Unger said. In addition to the store, the couple has a web site (www.nattybohgear.com), three kiosks in malls and vendors at football games.

Treasury Report

By Larry Hitchcock

11/28/05

Only a few transactions since my last report. We had a new member join and a little other income items. 2006 dues are rolling in, too.

Previous Balance **\$192.24**

Cash Received	
Sale of Club Beernecks	20.00
50/50 at Club tasting	22.00
2006 memberships renewed	195.00
New member	<u>18.00</u>
Total income	255.00

Cash Disbursed	
None	<u>0.00</u>

New Balance **\$447.24**

As we come to the end of this year, we may have some subsidy in the Club's annual holiday party- that is to be determined. Membership renewals for 2006 have been emailed or mailed out to members as of late November.

Let me know if you have any questions or concerns about the treasury.

Larry

(Continued from page 1)

BrewCamp has become known as THE culinary event of Thurmont (I just made that up, but in a place where the Pizza Hut is closed by 9:00 PM on Fridays, I am not afraid). This year was no different. We had three outstanding dinners, all prepared to perfection. Grill night featured grilled beef, bison, chicken and turkey. Smoker Night included two varieties of smoked salmon, chicken, and pork tenderloin. Stew Night was just stew, but what a stew: a Boeuf Bourguignon (French beef stew) prepared on-site by the Spousal Unit (who was in attendance at her first BrewCamp...yeay!). And ohmygod, the side dishes, including THE best macaroni & cheese casserole I've ever had, and THE best cornbread baked by Tom & Kathy Groseclose in a cast iron Dutch oven surrounded by hot coals. There were many others too numerous to remember right now to give deserved credit for, but let it be known that if it weren't for the fact that we are already a homebrew club, I would move to establish the Midnight Cooking League (or maybe, we can make that a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Midnight Homebrewers' League).



We planned to have a Pilsner-style beer tasting on Friday evening. But that plan suffered a setback right off the bat, when we started drinking the Pilsners on Thursday (oops). There still were plenty of different Pilsners to last all the way through Sunday, including Larry's kegged homebrew version. However, we did manage a quickie Dandelion Wine tasting on Saturday. Both Paul Seegers and Tom Groseclose had made separate batches of dandelion wine earlier in the year, and this was their "coming out" party. Brewed from different recipes, they each had a pleasant but faint mead-like aroma. Both were very tasty to me, and everyone universally considered them at least palatable if not downright good. Paul's recipe included raisins along with orange rind. Tom's had orange rind but no raisins,



and the citrus aspect was, to my palate, more noticeable. Both were crystal clear, and while Paul's had an amber tint (probably from the raisins), Tom's mason jar of clear yellow dandelion wine had the appearance of a specimen jar on its way to the drug-testing lab.

Tom and Kathy also brought with them a large antique apple crusher and press. Though she doesn't know how old it is, Kathy's family used it to make cider when she was a child. It is believed that her father had re-built portions of the wooden components, but all of the hardware is thought to be original. Apples from



Tom's grandmother's apple tree, and a sack of pears, provided the fruit. A couple of hours later, after everyone had a turn cranking the crusher's big handle, about 3 gallons of blended apple and pear juice were in the fermenter.

Sunday's massive breakfast consisted of the most health-conscious foods we had all weekend: scrambled eggs,

bacon, pancakes with syrup, corned beef hash, corn bread, fire-toasted French bread, and blueberry bagels. All accompanied by Bloody Marys and Mimosas, of course.

The final event of BrewCamp was a side-by-side comparison of the Clay Pipe Midnight Special Pale Ale, and a recently bottled homebrewed batch. The homebrewed batch was clearer, but the color, aroma and flavor of both beers were all very close. It was not a "blind" tasting in that everyone knew which beer was which, but the homebrewed version was said to be "crisper". We all got a chuckle out of the sight of six people sitting around the campfire on Sunday afternoon, each holding two cups of beer, as the park rangers drove around looking.

Next year, I swear I'll be brewing an extract beer at BrewCamp...but I seem to remember saying that last time, too. BrewCamp is my favorite club event, so the extra work it takes to pull it off is worth it to me.

Recipe: Back to Basics with Malt Extract Owls Victory Ale

By Steve Kranz

The early holiday season is a busy place around my house. Get the kid home from college for Thanksgiving. Get the other kid's college applications done and filed on time...the marching band is still performing (Westminster High's football team keeps winning, so the band marches on...). Shopping, baking, cooking...and let the parties begin! All of that means less time for brewing.

When I plan a brewing day, I usually have to figure on killing six hours. This time of year, when it's pretty much dark at 5:00 P.M., that means getting started early so I can finish while there's still daylight.

This predicament is one of the vices of brewing strictly all-grain in the winter-time. Fortunately, God bestowed upon brewers the free will (and the science) to brew as we please. We are not slaves to our hobby. Rather, our hobby should bend to *our* will. That means, rediscovering the joy and ease of extract brewing, and brewing any damn time I want to...day or night, indoors or out. (Did that sound like one of those Muntons ads that I trashed a couple of years ago?)

Oops. Haven't brewed with extracts in awhile, have ya? So hit the road, Jack, to Columbia and kill two birds with one stone: have a shopping and lunch outing with the kids, and make a stop at Maryland Homebrew on the way home. That's a plan.

I pulled the recipe together in my head at the store...two cans of extract, and a bit of crushed grains to steep. The extract I went with was Briess Pilsen Light...no particular reason except that it probably was the lightest-colored

American syrup extract there. I already had some hops and yeast at home.

By the time I got to brew this beer this past Friday night, the Westminster Owls were playing their semifinal game at home against City College, a Baltimore high school. After the first quarter, it was all Owls, who now advance to the State Championship this Saturday at M&T Bank Stadium. To commemorate their victory and their outstanding 2005 season, I named this recipe Owls Victory Ale.

I decided to modify the usual concentrated extract boil routine, by only boiling half of the extract. This would provide three benefits: it would help improve hop utilization by using a thinner wort; it would limit the risk of boilover; and it would reduce scorching and darkening of the wort.

Adding the second half of the extract after the boil seemed to work well (heh, we'll find out in about three weeks when I start drinking this sucker). I didn't get anywhere near a boil-over, and there was no noticeable scorching on the bottom of the kettle afterwards. I was careful not to splash the hot wort while mixing in the additional extract, and risk oxidizing it. The same thing goes for chilling afterwards in the ice bath. I filled the kitchen sink with water and ice, and sat my 20-quart kettle down into it, just like I learned when I started brewing. But it is more important to avoid oxidizing the beer by splashing or stirring too vigorously, so stir very slowly just to circulate the wort to dissipate the heat.

Owls Victory Ale

Style: 6A American Pale Ale
Method: Extract
O.G. 1.044

Ingredients for 5 gallons:

- 6.6 lbs Briess Pilsen Light Malt Extract Syrup
- 0.75 lbs Crystal 40L (STEEP)
- 1 oz. Cascade (Plugs) 7.2% BOIL 60 minutes
- 1 oz. Cascade (Plugs) 7.2% FINISHING 10 minutes
- 1 tsp. Irish Moss
- 1 pkg. Windsor Dry Ale

Procedure:

Add crushed Crystal malt to 2-3 gals. of 150F water and hold for 30 minutes. Bring to boil, remove from heat and slowly dissolve 3.3 lbs. of extract. Return to boil, and add bittering hops. At 45 minutes, add Irish moss. At about 50 minutes, add finishing hops. At 60 minutes, remove from heat, and slowly dissolve the additional 3.3 lbs. of extract with minimal splashing.

Chill in cold water bath down to below 80 F. Add cooled wort to fermenter, and add cooled water to bring 5 gallons of wort to approx. 70 F.

Rehydrate yeast in .5 cup of 95F water for 15 minutes. Pitch and aerate wort well.

Events Calendar

For all tastings, \$5 per member (\$7 for guests) covers the host's costs. RSVP directly to the host, or as indicated. If you wish to schedule an event, contact any club officer.

December

10 **Holiday Party** hosted by Karen and Greg Lambrecht.
RSVP - ASAP 410-848-6511

January

TBA **Chili Cook-Off** hosted by Gary and Lydia Cress. Info: 410-876-6605

February

TBA **Mardi Gras** tasting hosted by Steve & Michelle Kranz.

March

April
3-14 National Homebrew Competition First Round entries due

May

6 National Homebrew Day, 2006 Big Brew. Location TBA

June

21-24 National Homebrew Conference in Orlando, FL

December 2005

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

January 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

February 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

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Next, Steve Kranz will be discussing the possibility of teaching a homebrewing class for the Carroll County Department of Parks and Recreation. It would be some time in the Spring, but County staff first has to be sure it's all legal (y'know, beer on County property and all that).

We hope to keep everyone involved in brewing, and in the club, by scheduling tastings and other events that will suit a variety of interests. **Please take a look at your emails, and respond to the online Membership Survey** we are conducting using the same web site (surveymonkey.com) that we used for the recent club election. It works fairly well and it's free, but we were only limited to 10 questions, so we tried to squeeze the most out of each of them.

Three BrewLadders and counting...

Club members Steve Kranz, Larry Hitchcock and Paul Seegers have each built unique versions of the BrewLadder. As of this

writing I know of at least one more that's in the works. Each BrewLadder is a unique brewing sculpture incorporating the builder's own design and accessory ideas, based on the common design theme of modifying a store-bought 6-ft. wooden ladder by removing two of the steps and adding a fold-down shelf. This creates a 3-tier all-grain rack that is lightweight, portable, self-contained, and self-standing.

Anyone who builds a BrewLadder might also want to consider a personalized metal plaque with your name as owner/operator, model year, and serial #. For more information, revisit the Publications page on our web site and click the BrewLadder page link.

Steve submitted a write-up on the BrewLadder to Brew Your Own magazine at the end of October. No word yet on whether they'll publish it.